

County Line

News from the Government Offices of Lumpkin County, Georgia

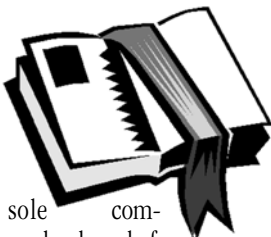
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New Board Makes History

A new chapter was added to Lumpkin County's history when 2005 saw the transition from a sole commissioner to a five-member board of commissioners. Chaired by former sole commissioner Steve Gooch, the new board also includes Dr. John Raber, Deborah Hutcheson, Clarence Stowers and Marvin Martin, all elected to districts but serving county-wide. Among the projects underway already: a new public works facility, a new state-of-the-art wastewater treatment system, a recreational complex, a regional recycling system and new fire station. Under the new system, commissioners set policy and guide the county, while a county manager and staff carry out the county's day-to-day business. The new Lumpkin County Board of Commissioners encourages citizens to be involved in local government. Meetings are publicized and posted at www.lumpkincounty.gov, and a call to the commission office, 864-3742, will put you in touch with the right staff member or commissioner to answer any questions or concerns you may have about your county government.

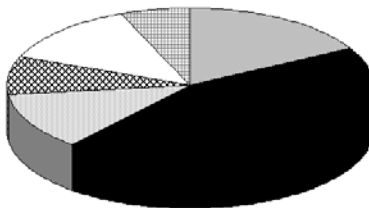


Manager Moves in to Permanent Role

The commissioners were clear about the goal: Find the most suitable candidate with proven leadership skills. After a public-private committee narrowed the search from the initial 47 applicants, Lumpkin County's Board of Commissioners interviewed three "finalists," and agreed the best applicant was right here in our own back yard. Stan Kelley, interim county manager since January,



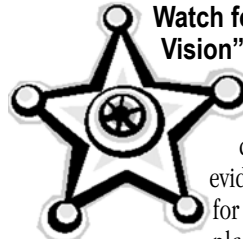
moved in to the "permanent" position of county manager February 24. Stan directs daily operations, carrying out policy set by the board of commissioners. He has 20 years of management experience in government organizations, most recently as chief deputy of the Lumpkin County Sheriff's Office. A graduate of Arkansas State University and the FBI National Academy, he earned a master of public administration degree at North Georgia College & State University and served 20 years as an officer in the U.S. Army. Despite his interim title, there was nothing temporary about Stan's approach to his 8-week interim position. He had already interviewed and hired key employees, identified departmental challenges and begun developing strategies to meet them, and sought additional training.



Budget Pie

This pie chart shows how the budget calls for county revenues to be spent in 2005. Clockwise, from the biggest slice: Public safety—44%; Judicial System—12%; Public Works—8%; Community Affairs—13%; Transfers to Other Funds—6%; General Government—17%.

Watch for Evidence of "New Vision"

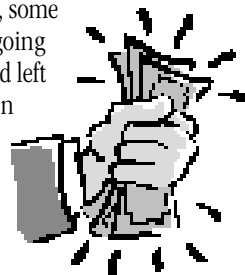


Lumpkin County Sheriff Mark McClure says citizens can already see evidence of his "new vision" for law enforcement, and a planned open house will show

off facility changes supporting his new slogan: *Serving Our Community*. The public, office-hours entrance to the Sheriff's Office is now in front of the building, facing East Main Street, and a small lobby with a receptionist has been added. The detention center and personnel entrance is on the side of the building. Also, look for new black and gray deputy uniforms and gray patrol vehicles, including three new Crown Victorias. Cost of the changes has been minimal and within his budget, says Sheriff McClure. Watch *The Dahlonega Nugget* for the open house announcement.

Tight Budget Paying Off

At the end of 2000, some actions of the outgoing administration had left Lumpkin County in severe financial straits. Incoming (then sole) Commissioner Steve Gooch engineered a \$16 million loan just to keep the county on the map! The budget has been extremely tight since then (just ask the department heads) and still is. But the belt-tightening is paying off—literally. The county is no longer in the red, and if the financial plan stays on course, most of the debt will be repaid by the end of next year, ahead of schedule, with the balance paid off in 2008. As for a family or business, the good payment history is improving the county's credit rating and overall financial health. That will be important when the county applies for low interest loans or matching grants to finance needed projects.



Bridging the (Nimblewill) Gap

After being ping-ponged from agency to agency for months, the Nimblewill Bridge construction project finally cleared its last red-tape hurdle. The new bridge will be built to much higher standards than the one it is replacing, which was destroyed by flooding last fall. The Federal Emergency Management Agency will reimburse the county for the estimated \$300,000 cost to build the structure, expected to be completed by early summer.



Lumpkin County . . . continued from reverse side

Keeping Up with Development

"But we didn't know anything about it!" Lumpkin County's planning and development staff hates hearing that when a new project gets started. The busy department is charged with keeping development within the guidelines of the county's Land Use Plan, working with developers and homebuilders on all project phases, from conception to land disturbance and building permits, plat approvals, soil erosion and building inspections through project completion, all the way up to adding new addresses to the official maps and the 911 data base. Staff members can approve routine construction projects that meet the Land Use Plan guidelines. For project proposals that are outside of the guidelines, and for subdivisions and multi-family housing applications, they



review the applications, then make recommendations to the planning board. Projects before the planning board are advertised in advance in the official legal organ of the county, *The Dahlonega Nugget*, then voted on at public meetings held the second Monday of each month at 7pm. These meetings are usually well attended and are now held at the Lumpkin County Parks and Recreation Community Center to handle the crowds. Appeals of planning board decisions are heard by the board of commissioners at regular public board meetings.



Play ball!

Lumpkin County's new Yahoola Creek Park, beyond the Senior Center and ball fields on Mechanicsville Road, is hosting Parks & Recreation Department team play this spring, even as work continues on the project.



Soccer is underway, and most girls softball teams will practice and play games on the four-field, wagon wheel design complex, complete with a press box, PA system, and electronic scoreboards, when the season opens April 16. A bonus: the facility will enable Lumpkin County to host state tournaments, a great way to boost our economy by bringing more visitors to our community. The county roads department is helping develop the park and working on a road widening project that eventually will improve traffic flow through it.

Lumpkin County Transit: Going Your Way

With just two buses, Lumpkin County Transit is small, as public transportation systems go, but it fills a big need. The system offers door-to-door transportation on a first-come, first-served basis by appointment, within Lumpkin County. Nominal fees are based on mileage. The service is available to all, but is especially valuable to non-driving elderly or disabled citizens who otherwise couldn't get to doctor's appointments, pick up a few groceries or take care of other routine personal business on their own. For these customers, the transit system is a ticket to independence. Lumpkin County Transit is operated by Lumpkin County's Emergency Services Department. For details call 864-6900.

Fired Up About Station #4

It's like rushing to get the nursery decorated before the baby is born. While a brand new pumper/rescue fire truck is being built to Lumpkin County's specifications, the race is on to complete its home, Fire Station #4, in time for delivery. The driveway is in, grading is complete, and after some final engineering adjustments, construction should begin soon. Plans also call for the facility to host a tanker and a 24-hour-a-day manned ambulance. Located off GA 400 on Chesterra Road, Station #4 will serve the high growth areas of south and southeastern Lumpkin County, cutting emergency response times significantly.



Just Call or Click!

If you have questions or concerns about your county government, answers or assistance are as close as your phone or computer. For contact information for county departments or commissioners, see Dept. and Contact Info at www.lumpkincounty.gov or call 864-3742.

County Commission

Steve Gooch, Chairman
Dr. John Raber, District 1
Deborah Hutcheson, District 2
Clarence Stowers, District 3
Marvin Martin, District 4

Stan Kelley
County Manager



Most Public Meetings Open

With few exceptions, meetings of Lumpkin County's boards, commissions and authorities are open to the public. For a detailed meeting schedule, visit "meetings" at www.lumpkincounty.gov or call 864-3742.

Board of Commissioners

Workshops—first Thursdays monthly; 9am, Dahlonega City Hall
Planning Commission Meetings—second Mondays monthly; 6pm, Parks & Rec Community Center
Board of Commissioners Meetings—third Thursdays monthly; 9am even months; 6pm odd months, Dahlonega City Hall

County Appreciates City's Hospitality

With five commissioners and a county manager instead of the previous sole commissioner, and with a healthy public turnout expected at the board of commissioners' meetings, it was clear as the new year started there wasn't a large enough meeting space at the courthouse. When the county asked about "borrowing" the city council chambers for its twice monthly commission meetings, the city council was pleased to share. Thanks, Dahlonega!

THANK YOU

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